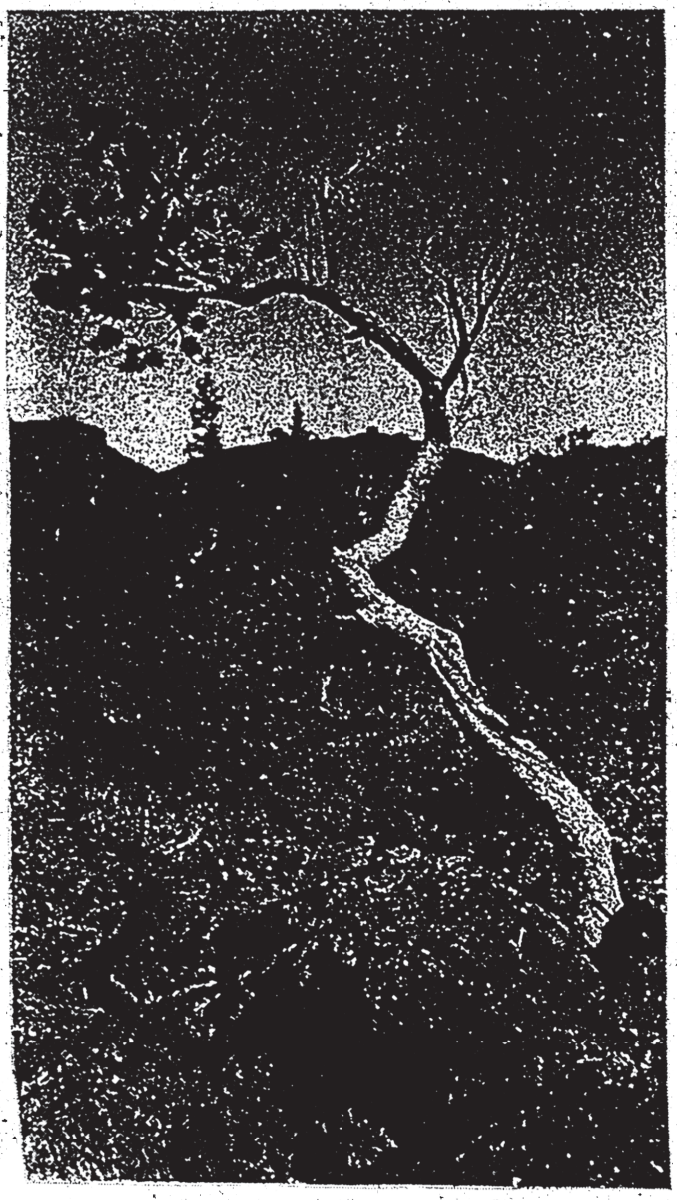
Marred By The Sun



DURELL SMITH

Marred By The Sun

~ ~

A collection of poems by
Durell Smith

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Thank you to
L.B.
T.C.A.|S.S.
B.S.|N.P.|C.S.
M.H.|C.M.|C.L.|A.C.L.
A.B.|M.R.|S.A.P.|J.B.|E.G.

-Eigengrau-

Coughed up
a
bag of oranges.

I catch you
in the mornings on
heavy
Mondays.
One of three
different costumes
over days spent
wasting time.
Burdensome
tired eyes.
You
need
to
weep
and just be alone
in your completion.

Vanilla
vine
floating in
petals and monachopsis.
Caught in
a tangle of silkworms.
Waking up confused
from a sad
dream useless to remember.

You keep telling me
you eat paper.
Paper with phone numbers.
Paper with recipes.
Paper with plans for September.
Paper with poems scribbled in wine.
Paper with letters never sent.

Why do you keep writing these letters to yourself?

You know no one will read them and even if they did
you'd just look foolish.

You remind me
that you are in
love with confidence
that does not belong to you.
Confidence in
art.
Math.
Riding a bike.
Arrogance.
You want to
feel some dream of peace
in a long alley
only to look
back at how
far you have come.

You need to weep.
So weep.

-Scarecrow-

I saw a
scarecrow
stumble through
the mall.
Arms stuck in place.
No love.
Sifting past people
too caught up
with getting to the
top of the stairs first.
I felt that
scarecrow
while I
stood in line at
the bank.
No money.
And everyone thought
well yes.
He is a scarecrow.
Look at him.
Would you expect
dollar dignity?
I heard that
scarecrow
crying in
the alley
empty
beside smoke.
No remorse.
Alone and
tired.
I watched that
scarecrow
dying
on a red velvet
outdoor rug
leading to a
locked door.
No help.
Walked over.
I stare stare stare
as I am
carried away while

the loud human
next to me complains
that they've had
that for dinner
two nights in a row.

Those eyes
beautiful eyes
eyes
so
worn
and
exhausted
but still
burning
resilience
emanating
humanity
I
sorely
desire
through
high
hopes
and
wishful
thinking.

-Anecdoche-

Meeting someone you
know you'll never see again.
        Magnificent.

They tell me
        I have to avoid certain words.
I tell them
        it doesn't mean that here.
They tell me
        I'm an old man in a twenty year old body.
I tell them
        I'm obsessed with nostalgia.
They tell me
        desolate smokestack clouds of home suit you.
I tell them
        let it be gray.
They tell me
        sorry I'm still getting use to the slang.
I tell them
        sorry I'm Thursday night wine drunk.

Sylvia Plath sticking her head
in an oven at thirty
is maybe the
saddest death.
I nod.

-This Is What Started It-

You
holy fucking
ghost.

How would
you feel knowing
I'm watching you after you've
been dead for as long
as I've
lived?

-Lay Here In It-

Streetlights of two a.m.
and a self imposed feeling
of red
keeping me from sleep.
The mammoth snow graters
sing a haunting melody of
scraping concrete.
I'm finding reasons for conflict.
Imagining scenarios like a clenched fist
or a ball of paper crushed into form.
I am so tired.
I have absolutely no patience
and bartenders ask why they
never see me at night.
I can barely put up with the creaking
of the neglected house let alone
a room full of testosterone fueled
assholes relying on a
cheap beer catalyst to try to
fight or fuck.
Deafening arrogance.
Resentment pure.
Why lurk about in the early morning
looking for a fight
when I can dream up spite
in a comfortable warm bed?
I don't owe the night a goddamned dime.

-Waking Up-

I don't know what brilliance
hits me first.
Light
        or the realization
I just woke up from a terrible dream.
I often don't remember anything.
Only left with the dreadful lingering
emotions my subconscious curses me
with throughout my waking day. This time
I retained not only the feelings but the
shapes and colors.

Waiting on a school bus as an adult.
The horribly unqualified driver left us on
the corner of the opposite street a
couple blocks away. One of my longtime
friends had the dog running wildly across
a busy street without a leash or concern.
I chased her down to take her back and
followed the system of quaint alleyways
back home. I had to get ready for a show
but my brother phoned to inform me
something was wrong with my mother
though I couldn't understand what he said.
I watched workers plant chives under the front
steps of the neighbouring house. My father
insisted everything was fine. I went inside to
find the shade of a lover unapologetically
fucking the bass player from the touring band
in the empty spare room. Disappointed and
stressed I went to the show at the church of
my youth. All I wanted was to go home
regardless of the band playing
using all my equipment.
So I sat in my depression
        waited
                then finally woke up.

Relieved that it was simply all conjured
in the shallow halls of my head
I still have to convince myself that everything I
feel isn't genuine. I get up and get
ready for work.

-Rearranged Pillow-

There it is!
Been waiting around here
sipping old beer
marveled by how well things are.
My marvelous comfort of
knowing things would be
where I left them.

Now?
Screaming into lamentable
pillows filled with rotten fruit.
An omission of how I should
be enraptured with circumstance.
I do not want to be in another life.
Fucking people tell me
ah man just go with it.
Just go for it.
You're not digging any holes here.
You're not making any trouble.
You've got green light open road.
Do what you want.
Stop being anxious.
Stop being anxious.
Relax man. You're
good.

Go for it? Watch me
ignore telephone calls.
Not answer my door.
Refuse to say hello
or thank you
or goodbye.
Never look old men
walking ugly dogs
in the eyes.
Cancel plans I made less than a day ago.
Play deafening drone by myself.
Rewatch documentaries.
Accept disconnection and
inevitable disappointment.
Be alone and appreciate it.

I think I will.

-Extinction Is What I Meant-

What an existence
dinosaur perspective
fighting in dirt
assume I am wrong.
Idol red door
why are you
going outside?
Even though
there is
blissful
midnight light
and vine covered
walls
you'll just end
up caught
in your own pit.

Pathetically
pacing
around my bed.
Embarrassed in my sleep.

-Selfish-

I was late for work today.
I burnt my hand today.
I swore it would be the last time today.
I doubted myself today.
I succumbed to juvenile frustrations today.
I heard the song I hate on the radio today.
I almost got into a car accident today.
I lost some money today.
I set my home on fire today.
I walked into a wall of bees today.
I choked on my own tongue today.
I ripped pages out of my favourite book today.
I played guitar for the
first time in months today.

My father sent me cryptic messages today.
Kurt Cobain would have been fifty today.
My head aches more than usual today.
Pitch dark bedroom scribbles to end today.

-You Will Know When I’m Awake-

I'm unfathomably comfortable
in a new space that I've barely breathed in.
Silently swearing under my breath
understand that I am not confident.
But I'll take whatever slight bright light
and hold on until it fades away with
anything and everything I care for.
I'm not a pleasant person and
I love it. Stay away.
Read my words and take them
for yourself because I'm still trying
to pull my chin over the edge of discipline.
Ever so the child trying to emulate.
I can't accept that I've maybe found myself.
God forbid I'm accomplished
in my aspirations.
I'll pull the bedsheets over my drunken eyes
and let it all fall to black.

-Knocked Out On Canada Day In Kelowna-

Are we only
going to burn
kindling tonight?

Jesus christ
those mountain
peak silhouettes
are killing me.
I can't remember
when I saw something
so strong sleep.

The wood burns
too fast.
Semi truck doom
instant death blink
overnight insanity.
Early morning fog
clear window
come to me.

Young animal
look at me.
See my elder.
She is tired.
She will lay
in the green.

Quiet blue stars
I want you.
I'm reading words
that have been solely
responsible.
I haven't listened
to my own age.
I've been too occupied
with terrible emulation.
Haunting inspiration.
Story true.
I know know know
twin tree
moss covered
illumination.

Sing a poplar
air song.
Either dog fur
or nature natural
filth
float glistening
in a perfect failing sun.

Kindling kindling
spoiled dog
everyone bouncing
in four wheel success
circling carved forest testimony.

I'm looking at perfection.
My prehistoric
sweet warm fire visions.
Dreaming.

You're sitting across from me.
I don't know you.
Your loud family reminds
me of summer to be cherished.

You see the same trucks
        I do.
You see the same trees
        I do.
You hear we're here
in this daymare
        like I do.

What can we make
of a nature set
to be some kind
of terrible
smoke
hidden mountain
trying to find
some fraction
sliver
crumb of earth
that I can share?
Simple symphonies
of green leaves.
Wind four four time.

Neanderthals emerging
from their motor caves.
Cheap beer champions.

Still feel like
I'm dreaming.

There's a hazy glow
and a sense or trick
of escaping Vancouver.
But there is nothing here for us.
Loud neighbor garbage music
fifth can observations from
underneath canopy.

This is
recreational
suburbia.

Everyone is just living
on their front lawns.
No doors
open window
family tendencies.
I can hear you.

Your children are loud
and rude
but fuck it
I was too.

Tattoo tank top
walking around
desperately seeking a glance.

Big brother cruelty
nuclear school yard.
Am I witnessing
identity forced into form?

I was trying to remember
the last time I came here
without the purpose of
begging people who were
friends of friends
to support

art too highly thought of.
My most magnificent mistake
for so many reasons.
That place had the same
dreary summer valley sun
that this shell of a forest has.
I fell in love with the
walls and homes.
Your shoulder met me
at the airport.
It brought me out
drinking and asked to use my phone.
It kissed me in a
drunken mystery
while I stayed in a room
erroneous as an impulse.
Horrible conversations
with the void
that tried to make me feel welcome.
Your friend is beautiful
and now they are my peer.

I bought a case of beer
and loaded it into my bag.
But goddamn I crave smoke.
Smell burnt marijuana
and ended up in cold dirt
without a memory of
the previous five seconds.

Perfect.
Knocked out on
Canada Day in Kelowna.

I honestly had it coming.
The cut inside my mouth
has healed and given way
to a confounded splendour of success.
I've robbed someone
of their luck.
I'm sure of it.

Wrench.
I pull myself back to
another night beautifully
sunk into purple and pink.

It is so quiet.
It is so empty.
Now I dance
with the twin tree after
nosebleed family dinner
around a dangerous fire.
I want to be
deeper and darker
my next time out.
There are street lamps
kitchen sinks
disgusting showers.
There is security
sneaking about.
But I see you
and you see me
twin tree.
I'm glad we met.
You are not a part of nature however.
You are an ornament.
A decoration to make
loud families think
they're getting out.

You try.
You do try.

I just can't
help noticing you're
on the corner of
the intersection
across from
novelty.

-Chest Pain-

If
I
fall
cold
at
work
know
that
I
lived
and
died
my
greatest
fear.

-Here Where I Am Not-

There's an old and bent
Chicago bus pass
I keep.
Reminiscent of chaos
melody
dissonance and
beautiful highways.
Uncomfortable neck breaking
sleeps while constantly comparing
tall buildings and narrow alleys
to those of home.
Walking through rooms and cities
made entirely of strangers I dreamt
of seeing for so long.
Breathing night air that my
lungs were unable to recognize while
listening to the midnight hum of Los Angeles.

I sat in a room of people
and took everything in.
I drove through magazine pages.
I drove through the night.
It didn't rain once.

I took as many small moments
as I could steal.
Different trees reach for me
and I brush their leaves gently enough
to say that I was there.
Certain rivers share bigger beers with me.
Invited into homes that don't make sense.

Three a.m. cigarette smoke with
peers you've never met
as if you belong in that Baltimore loft.
Motel rooms in small towns
because goddammit I want to drink
and fall into a bed.

Staying behind on blue sky days
avoiding showing my body
in a swimming hole fully
content with a book I've read four times

to keep me company like so many
wasted summer days.

Don't ever take ten hours for granted.
Faces you'll never see again.
Borders you'll never cross soon.
Opportunity is a fickle monster that
taunts with a broken grin dangling
everything in front of you.
Just out of sonic reach.
Seizable attainment.
Holy childish focus.
You'll find yourself eventually
stumbling in my shadow.
Feeling sentimental about
an old and bent
Chicago bus pass
in your wallet looking
for a ten dollar bill
that isn't there.

-I Know I’m Better Off (but I’ll still miss burning my arms)-

Startling
coma closed.
Wide eyed and not
dissimilar to the first day
of intimidation.
Floors. Floors. Floors.
White and glass.
Bite my tongue
and try not to let
childhood slip out.
New skin I'm
beginning to feel comfortable wearing.
Voice I'm finding in
proper greetings.
If not for this
black cat I've known
long years leading
me to doors creaking open
I would still be
thirteen years
treading water.

Mortality taught me first.
It would call me
“mon bonne homme”
while brought
downstairs for dinner.
Greed was my second teacher
but I guessed everything said.

Two brothers
that refused to bathe
scolded me while
cutting their own fingers.
One brother
standing in a yard of garbage
sticking his
tongue into oil.
The other
hollowed surrogate
unhealthy face
robbing his own home.

I almost drowned.
as a child but
crossed the river anyways
and stayed there.

Old man
far from home
told me to move like him.
Drunk bar secret spilling.
I still see him
walking out of
grocery stores
carrying heavy bags
in hands and under eyes.

Three years a cult
walking every morning
into that basement.
People giving themselves
ridiculous names as if it
meant anything.
You are not a raven.
You are not a star-god.
You are an elitist waste.
And you?
Hopeless
and now alone.
(I was accidentally sent
your lovers letters).

Foolish winter
hiding in a back room.
Balding boss
failing and knowing
tells me to gather
his sheep.
Maybe they wouldn't
stay away
if you weren't
a jackal.

Ah.
Ah.
But then I found
my home.
Despite the

house bickering
power moves
and relentless bullshit
I was comfortable.
But keeping your
head above water
is only so only.
I snuck out
the back door
saying nothing.

Presently
I sit by myself
in new skin
surrounded by
glass and white
wishing
everything I could
do wasn't so useless.

-Not All For Some But Few-

Why does it
often happen in the spring?

I imagine it's the toll.
That horrible
dreadful
painful toll of
winters much too long
and winds far too sharp.
Consciousness is already
a solemn burden and breathing in
ice slows my lungs
to an uncomfortable halt.
But it passes.
Oh so dawdling
messy and
sluggish. It passes.
And we'll count the days until
it's back in beautiful context then
excruciating presence.
But it passes.
At least it has so far.
Some can't endure the wait.
Though the sun eventually douses
the grass in gold
the cold takes it's toll.

-Ah, The Wine-

I saw the same
sad
sad
face I'm always disappointed to see.
The lyrics of terrible music pressed
into a cognitive view of what I regret.
Please don't parade them about.
They've been
read and
lived and
felt.
I can only roll my eyes so much.
Drunk on Valentine's Day.
Spent two hundred dollars more
on a meal than I usually would.
I'd rather listen to how much oysters
are despised than
another line about
another broken heart.

-Exhaust-

Gothic orchestral
cult like visions
of vague
sunlight.
Give it to me
only to
watch
watch
shapes of confidence
turn into misunderstandings.

Let me burn burn
miss the mark
and make the
sky useless.
Satisfied
with the blaze
like payday.
Fluent green
between
my toes
and the red under
my fingers.
I can’t hear.
Left confused.
Something about
one
hundred
and six
pours out of me.
Oily churches
splash around in filth
asking when does the
money arrive.
Happenstance violence
lunging over the
table with
azalea intent.
Write to me
that you ate

the petals and were
surprised
to wake up
in
poison milk puddles.

Stentorian sheet music.
Jump into the ocean.
Laughing while asking
for borrowed bills.

You'll see what I can do.

Crooked eye
misanthropic confessional
wishes.
Wishes of lazy change
revealing rotting gums.
Light the bed on fire.

What do you want?

Not much.
Balance.

I don't
like to
explain

why.

-Judging The Form-

I am no longer
of this world.
Greetings from
familiars that my
reflection of
former competence
appreciates but
can't reciprocate.
I'm older now
and pouring in drinks
for years has left me
drained
anhydrous
and poorly maintained.
Haunting a locus.
Hovering around black shoes
and denim adorned with images
I scoff at.
Dancing I scoff at.
Music I scoff at.
When it's my turn
I now am the hypocrite
who can't even finish
without tripping over themselves.
Without saying
a word because
I have nothing.
It makes me appreciate where
I am now.
What I find important now.
What I pride myself in now
because I can't fake
these appearances anymore.

I am too tired and the best part of the night is leaving.

-Hold My Breath-

Waking up to people's mistakes.
Harrowing conclusions dredged up
by a Friday night two shot pretense.

It was a particularly despicable
Saturday morning.
A booth reeked of dried vomit
and paychecks gone too soon.
I sifted through twisted and torn
coasters
wet nauseating sagging
paper mounds
strips and shards of broken
bar glasses
and used lime corpses.
Sipping my lukewarm coffee
staring at the line of people waiting
in wet late April resentful snow
outside of the record store across the street.
I hold my breath and tell myself I'm much too
tired from the
awfully uncomfortable night before.
Twisting and rolling around tied up in
heavy bedsheets listening to heavy rain
hit the roof. Counting restless hours
until I'm expected to be conscious.
But I'm already here. I'm already awake.
Besotted with four o'clock
work my way through
grime
time
and garbage
befuddled by how miserable Saturday
mornings can be.

-Wash Over Me-

The last of fall's
warm window shine
welcomes me in the morning.
Stairs I fell down
basked in glow.
Bars I fell into
pleasant orange.
Hills I sat on
(not picking up the phone)
collecting dew in the
recesses of my shirt.

It's Thursday.
Cummings joining me.
The bus is packed
with suits
and bags
and textbooks
and bad breath.
Can't even read
my fucking book
as it's constantly
being knocked out
of my hands by
someone pushing past
the collection of
mouths breathing
as if everything
were on fire.
When we reach
the top of the hill
bearing
towers of glass
I'll wake up to this.

Eluvium sits
at my desk with me
keeping me company
between dreams
of orchid chaos.
Helping me put
into words something
so fragile that

I don't dare share
with anyone in the
morning elevator ritual.
This pen feels good
even if I do not.
My allotted moment
of equanimity.
Over.

-Fog-

Asking one morning
when the fog was so thick
that I could not have seen
the block ahead of me
if I gave you everything
how long would it take
before you destroy yourself?

You told me

aren't I worth
finding out?

-My Worries Are Spoils-

Picking
at my terrible
finger nails.
I didn't even
realize
you were there.
Marijuana temporary solution
making for bad conversation.
Who let this abuse in?
Room full of empty people.
Too many
eyes I feel guilty
walking past.
Awkward
backward
handshakes.
Some ghosts I was
glad to see but mainly
buried head in hands
because I'm talking like
everyone else.
Despite trying.
I shouldn't try.

Men walking
out of banks
cursing.
Stale cigarette taste
pressed from
one tongue onto another.
Broken bicycle
back seat
taxicab flirting.
My night careening towards
bad sex and
wanting my own bed.

Eventually going home
where June asks me
why didn't I just stay?
One day I'll listen to her.

-Broken Glass-

What a terrible mistake
it is to have faith in anything.
I'll still end up in a dark room
by myself as if I'm being told
it is for the best.
Broken glass cracks and cuts
when I walk over particles. I never expected
it an hour ago but the cold swept in
and ruined the floor and my left foot.
So I'll hide because what the actual fuck
is the point of punching a wall?
My knuckles are pointed out
from wrong decisions before.
Swollen from immature tempers
and garbage that shouldn't have mattered.
That dumpster fire out back is swearing
at me in languages I can't discern and
I'm constantly allowing myself to
be pummeled into a skewed way
of dealing with my procrastinations.
The fire is warm. I let it singe the faint
hair on my arm. Eventually it'll burn the skin
but the comfort even for half a second is
enough to make me come back for more.
The hell with it.
Burn me up.

-Despotism-

I remember a night of
rain but sheer exuberance
standing outside an
old building along
a youthful street.
That building is rubble now.
I saw it today in
ruin broken wall
and metal beam
bent in just a way
as if my limbs wince
at such
awkward physical limitations.
It's still raining though.

Dampened cool air
ground drone
dull nagging torture.
        Can I sleep tonight?
I pursue
dirty
electricity
visions of
no wave
New York.

Love wrote to me
        I made it to the ocean
        and the smell made me vomit.

-Static Portrait-

Oh my do
common rivals
make abysmal allies.

Cut the shape of some
backhanded
amalgamated
cruelty.
Blister purple burnt paper
of what was
believed to be sincere.
I've felt those shapes.
It is a pure form
of conscious rejection
whittled into a
alienated custom.
The method is practiced
and preached.

Branches stretch down to me
and cover my eyes with
wet whipping leaves
so I can't see the roots
I'm tripping over trying
to find the individual
who could possibly help me
understand your maliciousness.

I was terrified of your scoffing eyes
towards my vulnerable words.
Considering you won't even look at me
when my name is in the heat of conversation
I've learned not to care.

-Window Blue-

Dirty
dusty
beaming
window
watch the tree sway
in the blue with me
do not interrupt my silence
it is warm warm warm.
I bask in the stillness
of my room empty
developing violet intentions
of days away through
some kind of pleasant
April lord of optimism.
I don't recognize the eyes.
Usually sinking in
dark dooming debt
I have this view
to show me maybe I've come home
to a well lit room for once.
Sip the dry cheap wine I bought
three days ago listen
to the life outside.
Don't bring me with you.
I'm finally comfortable
in a minute that will pass
like all others before.

-Flower Metaphor For Mortality-

Terrified to go back up there.
It's alive now.
What the fuck have I done?

Truth be green
Burroughs sunken shape
through downtown
red light window luminescence.
That curb is pretty steep.

You're already here.
I don't understand.
I don't understand
you're waiting.
This is where you've been.
One after another
all day shivering
dauntless single minute
confessions
waiting for me.

I gave you sound.
I gave you atmosphere
and I sat there in my
heavy clothes
reading so much defeat.
The sun reached through
the wall of glass behind me
but I might as well have
treated it like
a curtain
of mire
for all it provided.

You held me
and said okay.
I have a grasp
on some kind of
elemental
lightning bullshit
in a bottle
that requires I make a mess.

I ended the night
buying blackberries.
Not admitting joy.
A refusal to
spill color
onto my black clothes.

-Branches Akimbo-

I breathed
in magic and
tasted seconds
dipped into infinity.
Octobering
hidden passageways
where once tall sunflowers
wilt and hang their heads
as low as mine.
Noticing a half eaten hare
on my last
walk to well-wishes.
Parents frantically
sprinting with empty strollers
or
how I feel the need to
constantly prove my worth.
Both are one in
the same frustration.

The ink stain on my finger
is a damning reminder
of my father's hands after work.
I pass over piles of discarded
words like a silent phantom
or a cold wind that tells us
we're
        finished.

-Contemporaneous-

Downhearted.
Crestfallen.
Disconsolate.

I'm running out
of synonyms
for the
dangerously
typically
tragic.

While computers explode in black.
While bridges bend.
While the wind haunts.
While the highways are dreaded.
While lawyers weep with circumstance.
While angels are broken.
While power counts profits and casualties.
While calendars inherit garbage.
While my mother feels worse from chemotherapy.
While there is no warmth for the cold.

As Canada peers over the shoulder.
As paper and oil hitch a ride to New York.
As a Texas church is mourned.
As the president sells thoughts and prayers.
As boys are taught to kill.

-For I Am The Smoke-

The man sitting in
the last seat on the bus
is talking to himself.

“Man can't even create the mosquito.
Can you afford the fire?”

A new stranger boards.

“Hello! Hello!
How are you?”

“That's a nice walking stick
you have there” awkwardly replied.

“Mind your own fucking business!
For I am the father of smoke.”

The stranger
offended
soaking wet from the rain
turns away.

“Beautiful day today, isn't it?”

I couldn't agree more.

-Cruel Child-

Inane.

Inane
cheap problems
from a loud school
I knew
echoes from.
Meaningless
social
kingdom
that dissolves
with a blind
look at the sun
once finally
stepping outside.

The
utter cruelty of youth.

Once weird captivation
stealing pictures
out of my locker.
Spending
a grey day
walking suburbia
hand in hand
with doubt.
Eventually
phoning me
from a ravine
in tangled mess
of mushroom mind.

I would ignore those calls.

The drinks
        too much.
The drugs
        too much.
The party
        too too much.

Rude volume gossip

distracting me
from poetry.
You will be
eaten alive
in two years.

Today

comparable
to snow
blanketing Halloween
no one cares
for theirs
or your
juvenescence.

-Anything-

Drunk in the gazebo
on a Sunday night.
I can hear the river
and beer bottles
roll through the phone
as she knocks them over walking by.
I'm calling too late.
It's my own fault.
There's a time difference
I always forget. Not her.
She's making it very known
that there's
difference
distance
and absence.
This is your home.
This is your home.
        It was
in wrecked mangled
teenage perplexity.
        It's still there.
It's just that you and I are not.
I'm calling too late.

-Masking-

Remember.
Just because he
played in that
ever so crucial
band to your
lost and wayward
teenhood
spelling out your
angst as if you've
just learned to read
doesn't make him
any less of a
predator.

-False Jazz-

I am okay.
I am okay.
I am okay.
I am a fool.
Am I a fool?
Am I a fool?
Am I a(okay) fool?
Am I (i'm okay)a fool?
) I am a fool
I am fool okay (
I am a (fool?)
)Am I okay?
Am I okay?)
Fool.

-Moth-

Allowing light on the stairs
after burning purple
makes me sick.
Old drum
in wet grass
under enervated
tangerine street shine.
Awkwardly folded
arms beside cocaine bathrooms
I caught myself in a corner.

Moth.
Endlessly seeking the moon.
Confused
by the sleepy glow of my porch light.
I keep the moon there
so I can see when I finally sit
by myself after dropping mistakes.
I keep the moon at work
hoping I can share whatever I could that night.
I keep the moon in my back pocket
to console my exertion.

It's a crutch.
Similar to everyone else's
but this is mine.
I get tricked by
concocted futile light too
looking for what I can't
ever hope to reach.

-Wanted Familiarity-

Yes. Yes.
Sit me in the soft
glow of this jaded room.
Show me retrospective corners
and shadows.
Golden tinged
crack adorned
old plaster walls.
Red wine
circle stained
coffee table history.
I feel like a forgotten year
of indulgence. Holy shit.
Halfway done a bottle
of cheap wine while halfway
done a book of depressing philosophy.
I saw a photo of the one time
I smiled in a room looking
like I knew what I wanted.
Goddamned old street lights
waiting for the day to fade away
in an explosion of color
as if showing me I
ran out of time
ran out of time
too late to join.
So I'll sit at home
with a dull yellow light.
Warm.

-Left Turn-

I have seen the
depths of people.
It is cold
and lonely
and lonely
and terrible.

I don't trust the
blind turns
of politicians
drunk at the wheel.
The radio assurances
of conciliation turned too
loud to hear me cry
before I am run
down in the middle
of the street.
Will we all inevitably
fall asleep to the
tailpipe lullaby
slowly closing our
eyes one
at a time?

This will be one long night
before the dawn breaks.
Each second ticked into history
as the next will be killed for.

Carbon
monoxide
headline
poison.
How long can you hold your breath?

-Heave-

I'm getting myself
a lottery ticket.
Spend the rest of my
hours reading poetry
from colleagues
young in practice.
Spend the minutes
in between over
texts of philosophers
long gone.
Cioran the depressed.
Nietzsche the loner.
Then I'll let Zinn
take over and show
me how to navigate.

I'm getting myself
a plane ticket
just to leave
and not give
a single
farewell.
Leave and be new.
Leave and establish.
Leave and be infatuated
with new leaves of trees
that my childhood
won't recollect.
Like all
extravagant infatuations
cold sobering
reality fueled
by my typical
pessimism will
knock on my
worn wood door
to tell me I
have made
a mistake.

I'm getting myself
a parking ticket
leaving the van

that carried
me through mountains
and prairies to see
Vancouver or Saskatoon.
Windowless white
War of the Worlds
at night.
Sick in Thunder Bay.
Alive in Calgary.

Get out
from behind my
fucking eyes Aries.
Leave my face
and torture someone
who
believes in
you.
The stars you are
made of have passed.
Like the philosophers.
Like the leaves.
Like the peaks
and wheat I
crawl through
in dreams.

Dogtooth
and
Arrowhead.
I've done it.

-Not Too Far-

It was so obvious.

I knew there was something
behind
quietly
closed doors.
As if trying to
hear
hear
a fascination with a body
that wasn't mine.
Mouth that wasn't mine.
Tongue that wasn't mine.
Spit that wasn't mine.
Ribs hips and hair
that wasn't mine.
A thumb tracing the curves
of partially chewed lips
that weren't mine.
Some chance at sharing mutual joys
that were definitely not mine to give.
I'm okay.

Mornings are fine.
Evenings are fine.
Everything fine fine.
Other hands gave me nightmares
but I grew up. Jealous little itch
torn through bodies of understanding
corner of the bed synchronized
undertakings of loneliness.
Night away gathered glimpses
of eyes that I could only see
from drunk taxi compromise.
Touch my back and look at me.
I can walk talk the thought of
bare knee tattoo identity
bar to bar hurtle and so on.
Letting little longings be.
Walks in the opposite direction
of home because
cab drivers
are never to be trusted.

I'll provide some side road company
if only for your
twenty more minutes of my voice
and when I'm kissed with stained lips
in the warmth of front entry presence
I won't feel ashamed because
cool midnight sincerity was shared with me
and I have every reason to smell you
on my jacket.

-Burnt Garage-

I dread walking to work
despite the unseasonable warmth.
One day I will slip on an
ice covered sidewalk
and break my wrist.
It's one of my worst fears.
I'd be useless with just one fracture.

I distract myself from
inevitable accidents as soon as
I notice the burnt garage I always pass
that has gone through
rain wind sun snow
without repair.
What's left of the charred frame just
hangs there pathetically.
Mornings upon
days upon
weeks upon
months. It hasn't changed.

I decided to stay after work the
night before and empty a couple bottles.
Fuck. Shit. Oh goddamnit.
Did you really talk about that?
Did you really talk to them?
Were you really that loud?
You are an ass!
I swear there were eyes rolling
all over the wood floor.
I didn't notice. I was too busy
stringing nonsensical conversation
through annoyed ears.
It happens every time.
Just sew my mouth shut and grind
my teeth into dust. I won't ever utter
another drunken syllable again.
Year after year
I kick myself for attempts
of hanging around
like that burnt garage
that never changes.

-Convocation-

Sun cooked worms
dried and crushed
sought surface drenching
ocean
met with drought hot
concrete existence
literally littered
careful careful
step around
though it's clear
people on their
way to Monday
didn't notice.

-I Know You Know-

There are bones
of abandoned bodies
in the foundation
of every bridge and
as often as I want to
I try not to ignite them behind me.
People have been noticing
my laugh more more more.
I find it irritating like an intolerable
cold breeze
or a swell of existential dread.
I don't want to be well known
only thought of if it's time to be.

I've heard about the liars
under the stairs
and the abusers
milling about in
well kept kitchens.
Those are the bridges
that should be burnt
but what awful skeletons
would be exposed.
Scorched with the uneasy conclusion
like that horrible house
where people died
I'll find you frantically
scribbling a
secret
hidden
vast corpus
of regretful
mistakes
in a garden
of dying vegetables.

Your home can only be so clean.

-Sentimental History-

What a pile of shit.

I'm crying
watching my
favourite movie.
I think of the dust of
time that has weighed
on me like insurmountable
history since first laying eyes
on everything.
The eons of life
that I've only lived.
I have come across so
many souls. What genius manipulative
conundrums and attempts led me
to their lives only for them to come
to the same conclusion.
I am this film.
It has defined me.
Popcorn.

Even people reading this know
what I'm talking about because
our paths have crossed too and
they have heard my ramblings
of puerile appreciation.
But they don't know
how I feel every second
of vision
and tone
and aesthetic
and simple facial expressions
and shadow of fern
and the extinction of an art
and the theme of divorce
and how I came home bullied
and how I ran into fiction
and how my parents fought in the next room
and how my headphones were heaven
and how their favorite song
is my favorite scene
and how at thirty since six
I still lean.

I scoff at myself
wipe my eyes
and pour
another glass from
an almost empty green bottle.

-I Woke Up To My Misanthropy-

"The world
is a fucker."

I stare out my
back window as
February snow falls
gracefully to the ground.
I am enthralled with which
the drifts use the winds to dance.
Soon it will melt away.
I can't help but think
we deserve to go with it.

Don't let it escape you
humans are a disease.
Nothing that has ever lived
has ever been so destructive.
Everything of value
to keep the line formed into
single file footsteps
retracing the ones made before.

We are isolated as it should be.
Our traditions are safely stowed away.
We have ignored beautiful
discoveries for exploited profit.
We need to stay of this world
not spread our egotistical filth.
Fall into chasms of molten fire
when the earth has finally had enough
and deservingly swallows humanity whole.

I stare out my
back window as
I take a sip of my
coffee gone cold
and make my way into
the next room to read
under my favourite lamp.

-Next Door-

The dog snaps at the cat
that jumped from the bed to
the dresser. Golden waves flow
through my bedroom window
and past the curtains that the heat
register air gently move.
I smoke a marijuana cigarette
as I usually do in the morning while
I wait for my coffee to finish.
I leave the house early for once
and arrive at work
ten to ten.
The radio gives me a sobering reminder
that I've been spoiled by the sun.

It's not as if it's any better here.
We stare past our living rooms
next door
as if the distance is enough
to ignore
all the ugliness we can't swallow
with headline breakfast.
Looking into the windows across
the street consoling ourselves
with the belief that it's just not like
that in our homes.

Hate lives here.
Don't make that mistake.
It isn't held back by maps.
It's fixed on your window
just as much
whether you accept it or not.

-I Remember This One-

Ah.
Another half empty
earache that I wanted to
see in full pain.
All the noise is starting to
coalesce into a frequency
I can barely interpret.
I can't wait to be home
and let the ringing subside.
All I can do is let the pressure
against my chest pin me to
the back wall of the room
with extravagant invisible might.
Free beer is a terrible
vision of what to come.
Shoulder to shoulder to stranger.
One night I won't be here.
I won't bend up the stairs
and fall through the front door.
Keeping quiet at home
cursing at the cat around 1 a.m.
reminiscent of nights
that I would curse at myself.
Damn you.
You knew it all along.
I'll clench my fists
and repeat your words.

-On A Sincere Tuesday-

Excess heavy coins turned into
cab fare
I finally went out.
Initially sitting on my usual
condescending
condensation
brown bottle bar stool
I met the person who
knew my youth
and a soul I heard laugh
but wanted to have
depressing
honest
conversations with.
Let's go next door.
We need a tolerable drone
and a flickering dull light.
Three drinks carried
without a drop for the
thirsty floor and we got into it.
Ill perceived expectations
explained
around the table.
Fuel the memories of premature
house parties and cases
too big for too small.
Propel the resentment of
terrible men past
redeeming a token pass
sadly typical of today.
Karma being a sorry excuse for
forging our own bullshit destiny and the
best kinds of wine drunk.
I ended the night by saying I needed this
and was met with mutual arithmetic.
Assuring formulas that ultimately
rely on a swing in the dark.
I'll probably end up hearing a
Springsteen song or six while true words
are shouted in a full bar to make sure I
don't regret that I opened my mouth.

-I'll Let Tonight Name This One-

Red.
Fireplace dawn
burning reflections
into view.
Embers of
an evening I
could not have seen
following me
home from work.

The day gone away.
What torture.

Sharp grey
and cold.
Streetlights
falling through
windshields
yielding lonely
roads I cross
at my leisure.
Death hanging and
decomposition everywhere.
Surprised to find
love waiting in bed
asking me to lay down.

Take this portion
of warmth and feel me.
Graze naked surfaces
and value the
contours of my topography.
Attempting cartography.
Mapping of the body.
Circumscribing this room.

Hold. Hold.

I followed a melody
downtown. Tasked
with giving
routine and function.
Watch the hands

and mouth
keeping time.
Singing about bar stools
I know all too much of.
Recounting mistakes
made at 3:36 a.m.
behind the bar
sitting in the car
smoking between
being shown favourite songs.
Stuck in traffic and kissed.
Sickly cigarette tongue
that gently passes through
months.

I felt it until I slept.
We'll meet again in the night.
Love still waits
and rests beside me.

A retrospective.
I now stare
at the high rise
next to mine
and wonder if this
morning fire
is burning
your eyes
too.

-I Was Asked About Liberosis-

For all I know
I bestow no tranquility.
A sunscape infatuation
of disheveled alleyways
and resentful apartments.
Stained yet sterile hallways.
We can't keep running
around the same old neighborhoods.
The mind numbing cadence of
broken bottles.

I smell the ash
of years gone and
incomprehensible irrigation.

It makes me decrepit.
Pray to whatever god
you trust and ask her
to grant me a drop of
liberosis so I can stop
sleepwalking down
crooked pavement
leading me to Christmas mornings
and summer vacations that obviously
won't ever be attained again.

-If I Say Oven-

Holy fuck.

Sitting at that
bus stop
on 109
and Whyte.

You know.

The one
where
dreary
dreadful
souls
wait
after wasted
eight hour days
just wishing
for a
percentage
of
lazy
lazy
okay
bre
a
the.

You're among
glass now.
I drank for
two years.

Carry me
away.
Unknown
no
backpack.

109 street.
72 avenue.
Ah.

Now
I'm alone.

Cold
bus
bench.

Inches
away
from
vehicular
manslaughter.

Ahh.

Send me your rose.
I'm happy for you.

I'll sleep.
Let Sylvia's
birthday
be
awake.

-Get Out Of The Ghost And Follow Me Home-

Dust covered
warehouse homes
in hangover
morning light
how long has it been?

Parking lot
cursing ghosts
while beautiful trees
erupt from concrete.

Smokestack monument
still standing
among industrial renaissance.
Gold thoughts over
the hill where
I watched car wrecks.
I caught caterpillars.
I heard cattle cry.

Flying
past
river parks
I've been found in.
Electricity giants
looking
over
118 avenue.
Somber roadside crosses
so close to home.

Canadian Texas
open field
bored and holy.
Forgetting
how old
telephone poles are.
Low hanging clouds
sweep past.
Blue being covered

by blankets of warm rain.
Vegetable oceans and
long summer shadow
decorated dirt roads.
I am hurtled
into wheat.
Marijuana time fix.
Dragging into towns
stood in for moments.
Rolling
down a street
that
has
more
liquor stores than schools.

Ah now
endless raining
horizon ranging
in permitted sunlight.
My favourite smell
in the world.

Looming dooming
natural walls of
gorgeous dreary
shades of atmosphere
how long has it been?

Staggering into
the same patches
of
western red lilies
under
familiar bridges
reaching
over the identical
river as home.
As I've dipped
my feet in
years and miles ago.
I made a promise
to come back

though the form
has changed since.

Cutting into asphalt
        pools.
I've always admired
the travel journals
K.W. kept.

I feel redundant
for being surprised
by isolated
Saskatchewan storms.
Almost as pristine
as massive green trees
standing alone
        erupting from solitude.

Barren
tranquil
heat
fields.

                How long has it been?

Five hours spent
in a city
I'm lost in.
Neighbourhoods
I don't sleep in.
        I'm
        only
        here
        to be
        furious.
                To rob
                you of
                your
                expectations
                and money.
Homes with broken doors.
Architecture like a 1976 wish that fell asleep too long
providing me vicarious comforts.

Sitting in front
of three strangers
who laugh between
themselves while
I
 write
        these
              words.
The corner of the
bar lined with
broken pinball machines.
Knife fights between friends
in the alley out back.
Too
tired
to
try.
Free beer
          is not enough
to listen to these
harsh voice splintered songs.

                How long has it been?
Waiting in loud rooms
anticipating a terrible sleep.
Music I hate.
Expensive wine.
In a matter of days
I can honestly say
thirty was the worst year.

                        How long has it been?
                2:36 beer
                        and
                        smoke filled
                        apartments.
                        I felt sick
                        after the set
                        though I played
                        it
                        safe safe.
                        I didn't drop them.
                        Again vain induced coma
                        enough to sleep on the floor

somewhere that
will scare me
with unfamiliarity
come consciousness.
It’s all so routine now.

How long has it been?
Five in the morning existence.
Are you real?
How am I alive
with
more more
too afraid
to lay my head down.
Hollow box
because I want to
feel delirious joy
instead of typical ache.
I don’t know
lying next to a pile of empty trophies.

How long has it been?

Truck stop dawn.
Day to days
in and outs.
Can you feel
their intimidation?
Highways of Canada
all look the same to me now.
Everything looks like
the art of
special low frequency.
Infernoed
vast
void of soil
met
with
perfect royal blue
purple
and pink.

Get
out
of
the
ghost
and
follow me home.

-Forbearance Come Warmth-

Hell.
Please let me enjoy this
breeze whispering summer
and green. I smelled the rain
yesterday releasing dirt from concave
epiphany. Oh what life. Sit with me.
Overthrown petty overheard
dialects about ex-girlfriends and the boys
I enjoy the drone of rush hour floating
down eighty two. My feet are sore sore.
I'm not waiting for anything anymore
in warm month long days. I'll take whatever hours
I can and spend them
on nights none
of throwing myself into
make
or break
or burst.

Simple joy.
Simple joy.
Simple summer of no eminence.
My pessimism is taking a sojourn
from decadent expectation. No maps.
I've fallen far from desired routine.
My memories are not to be built on.
I've let go of the burden of years gone.
Moon. Moon.
Warm backpack midnight beer
carry me with you.
May.
        July.
                June.

-Green Telephone Head Wound-

Now come
on now.

Missing the small
imperfections that tell
of once when our trails
weren't covered by technology.
Small cynical glimpses
that would define my words.
Tell me of a world when I slept
and would only feel the same
frustrations of my father.
Pour that fucking wine in
like my mother.
Lock the doors at night
like my brother.

Seemingly simply simple minded
yellow table reading political jabs
that rush home from swimming practice.
Tell me how to laugh and show me that
being sentimental isn't weak but proof
of an intelligence that transcends
chalkboard rhetoric.
It's quite frankly the line in the honesty
that I draw from everyone else's sad humor.
Every year I'm peeling back a fold.
Each more monolithic than the last.
What a shell wonderful purpose became.
Some self deprecating worship.

Looking back
I don't regret hours in front of molding light
and how I continue in impossible years since.
They've really called it for what it is.
Being that relevancy isn't dwindling
I don't see myself leaving anytime soon.

-Naked Monument-

Jealous boy.
Murmur. Oh shy whisper.
I'm just as much a product
of empty wine bottles
as I am masculinity.
Thin razor self esteem
crying for a
way to dispel all
these mortifying emotional
conduits running up the spine
of what it is to be a man.

Fathers have failed me.
Demeaning order.
Stand straight
and not touch.
Do not feel or
know the
consequence of
broken lines.
Stone eyes.
Oh I
want broken statues.
Marble shard debris
laying below
a strange dust
that immediately
dissipates.

Buried in
a broken machine.
Uncomfortable
as this sharp pen
scratching
ink into
paper like
regrettable little scars.

Why can't I cry?
Or sing?
Or love without
carnal expectation?

Why can't I
be emotional?
Why can't I hold?
Why can't I release color?
Why hate myself
for hating myself?

I welcome vulnerability
and that's okay.

-Let’s Drown Outside-

Orange
melted view
into blue.
Muttering
impeccable
directions.
Walking in
three four
time past
windows I held
in such youth awe.
Lead me still.
Pull me by my
callused small hands
to sweat drenched walls
of sonic points in time.
I've wasted too many
confident days at work.

I understand whispered
senses of porcelain
air breathed in rhythm
of faces not
met with
circles.
But what words
meant to dust is
everything.
I am but a
particle of importance.

Can I help
in the garden?
Let grow that
deserves to flourish.
Boys that hurt for joy
don't belong
singing you songs.

Punk rock
pipe
dream

like my
brown
eyed
dog
rolling
in
crushed
strawberries.

-Exulansis-

Beautiful.
Beautiful.
Beautiful nostalgia.
Using an embellished palette
of youth and seemingly no regret.
Silk drapes like years past.
I find myself looking out windows
with the sun bent in just a way
and wonder whether this too
will be looked back on fondly.
Any little detail will carry on
a fascination with a time
that combinations of colours
are affectionately memorized.
I drown in exulansis.

-Cumulonimbus-

Sunken.

Rolling
city oceans.
Horrible chlorine
taste of drowning.
But I am so
in love with
deep ocean swells
standing there
with my hands
on my pacific hips.

Neon
two a.m.
lights
pig tattoos and
inevitable violence.
The earth shattered
but the night was ruin anyways.
Ugly love
left alone
committed to the mess.
Open shadow hallway
to closed doors.
Blue
suburban
headlight trees.
Hanging light
I can't reach to fix.
I've seen familiar
endings met with
uncomfortable
wet
kissing.

Dull roses in 1995
and I'm afraid
to be late.
Driving

stop
talking
pale
morning
streets.
Colours
I was told
I could not hold.

A panoply
of lonely bus beers.
A reminder
of a need
to take in the colour.
Rooftop sharp silhouettes
cutting into
oranging baby blue. The
long long
depressing bridge
alternating in yellows
and violets.

Wall
paper
peeling
stress
heat.
No matter
where I go I
smell the burning everywhere.
Devouring smoke.
Choked on the ash of
porch symphony nature drone.
Like
a beautiful August Austin
downpour rain
ripping screens
off the windows of my
restlessness.

Torture of
time
time

time again
time against
time.
Love gave me
a leftover sun
and told me to leave
so I cross
my favourite
streets in my sleep
and hope to wake up warm.
Leftover sun.
Red fire
cathedral
I allow to blind me.
If you
are
there
come
here.

Circles
and circle thinking.
I spent first spring light
sleeping
amongst
melting concrete.
Oh
the smell that
comes with
fields of melting ice.
Of
Winter's death's death.

I am too dreary
empty room party
wine gone gone
blunt and nervous.
In pleasant dreams
I still miss opportunities
as if
knowing
someone is home
by doors being slammed shut.

Are you still capable of crying?
Violins sing for me and
I can’t help it.
I shouldn’t help it.
Watch me weep
and then hold metal.
Hon
est
ly
I can’t go alone
but
if I was given bad news
I wouldn’t be
terribly
troubled.

Mouth full
of sunflowers.
Cathedral.
Cathedral.
Green forest empire.
My Canada
is a broken
window ignored.
I’ve begun
to drag myself
out from under
the stairs.
Doused in
leaves like I
was before.
Even then I knew
it would prey on me.
I hold it back
when I tell myself
go.
It's nine at night
and you’re calling.
Of course I’m cinder
otherwise I would
be stuck
with my voice

whispering a fortune
like a train derailment.

Let me sit
in the dark
and try to understand.
Let endless waves
crash in my head
regardless of
being able to see.

Radio
fragments I
found beautiful
in my youth led me.
Now I'm here.
        A conflict that
        makes no sense to me.

Hiding myself away
trying to find the right
words to say
no different than
a carriage
stranded
in a
mound of salt
rusting
any
use of carrying
anything important.

Throwing stones
at birds
to complete my loneliness.
Goddamned
and seemingly
proud of it.
Heavy curtains
to provide my
brilliant
dull
light.

Carve out my static
and cave in
my skin.
Thankful for my notes
I've found again.
Talking through March
to no one.
Maybe
I've found it.
Maybe
this storm
won't flood Edmonton.
I refuse
to be ruled
by my
hesitations.

Throw me
into a living room
of eyes I don't
recognize.
Leave me
at the kitchen table
drinking the red
out of cups.
Follow me through
grocery aisles
while I pick
out my vegetable debt.

Sitting at
the same dark bar
with new company.
Rilke pours honey
into my eyes
watching
Penderecki pull
dried twigs
out of my ears.

This is where
I wrote about Chambers.

This is where
I lost the fear

of sentimentality.
This is where
I tasted influence.

It's all so much
and too little
to make out.

Alexandra asks me
how could I read
like that?

The truth is
I can't. As comfortable
as I was
I've left it for
warm incoherent
afternoon shadows tracing
the curves of a crooked
box filled with
shriveled roses hanging
alone on my wall.

Turbulent
dust lit
lilac light
summer vision.
Bringing the
constant weight of
disgusting sweat.
July sundown
after a mutual
thunderstorm.
In awe of my
pink cumulonimbus
and I won't be intimidated.

Magnificent sky bound
masterpiece
take

me
up.

Tell me it’s
passed.
Rolling in the distance
I
acknowledge thoughts
of homes
far from mine now
stuck under
those same
heavy curtains.
Watching wind carry
knowing all the while
it will return.

Tonight
I will sleep
only to wake up
in the
middle of the night
to find
all the armies
of my anxieties
are gone.

-Dreamscape-

I feel like
Los Angeles 1981.
Glare and glow
dreamlike timber
parade of
people
people
heatwave resonance.
I feel like
generations of traditions.
Scorn children
run free and scream
I will accept you.
I feel like
one can inspiration.
Grease the gears
and get the motor going.
Words are falling from
a clean sky like jumbled
messes of interpretation.
I feel like
shadow lurking from
tall dry arms that surely
are terrifying in a storm.
I feel like
a sliver of peace
and wonder where and when
did I pocket such luck.

Durell Smith is an Edmonton, Canada based poet writing on the anxieties and frustrations of everyday life. Accepting negativity and using it for fire. He frequently performs readings with drone, harsh noise, or ambient musical accompaniment, and is a curator of the Drone & Words performance series.

Other collections include a 32 poem chapbook, "Don't Take This Too Seriously", and mini book "Purge."

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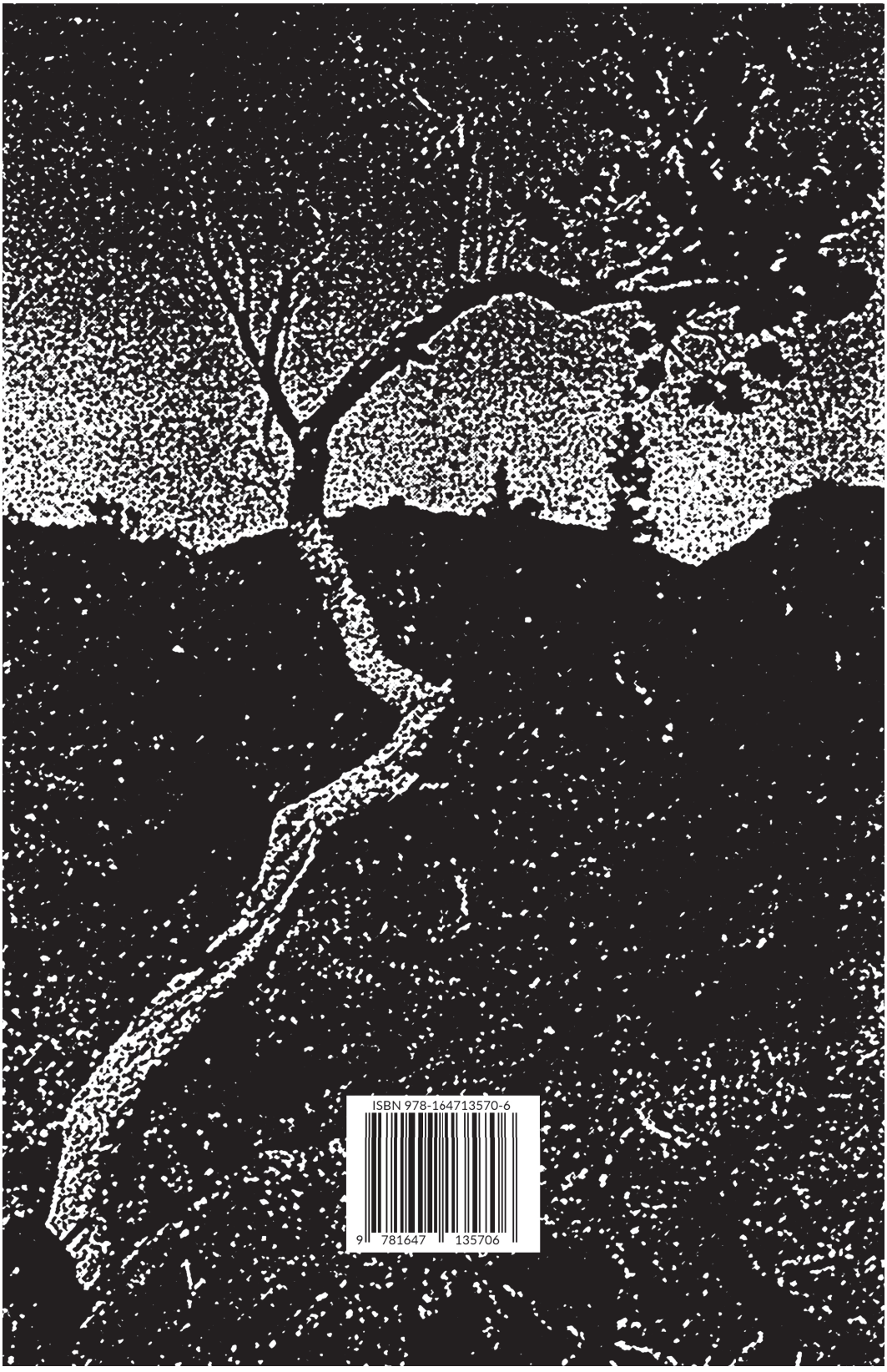

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